



## ESSEX FETA LESBOS

Made in the village of Agra on the island of Lesbos, Greece.  
Protected Designation of Origin (PDO).

<b>VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS</b>	Block, 4.5 kilos, 12 centimeters square.
<b>CATEGORY OF CHEESE</b>	Brined curd cheese, sheep's milk.
<b>SCALE OF PRODUCTION</b>	Made by third generation firm M. Tastanis. Artisanal process using milk purchased from individual shepherds in and around the village of Agra.
<b>MILK TYPE</b>	Pasteurized sheep's milk from the Lesbian breed.
<b>CHEESEMAKING DETAILS/ PROCEDURE</b>	The feta is made every day between Mid-December and the end of July with a combination of chilled evening milk and fresh morning milk. After the milk is pasteurized, it is cooled down to 33 Celsius when it receives a spoon of yogurt and starter culture. Animal rennet is added fifteen minutes later. Thirty minutes more and its texture is like yogurt and the curds can be cut horizontally and vertically into cubes. It's salted and pressed for thirty minutes, then salted again on each side for several hours. This process is essentially the same as described in Homer's Odyssey, where the Cyclops was a cheese maker.
<b>AFFINAGE/ CHEESE MATURING NOTES</b>	The cheese is cut in sixteen kilo pieces and placed in tins with brine where it spends a week. The brine is refreshed and then the feta continues to age for several months. It may be sold as young as 4 months or as old as 18 months.
<b>APPEARANCE</b>	Snow white with a slightly crumbly texture.
<b>SMELL/AROMA</b>	Yogurt, fresh cream, lactic, seaside.
<b>FLAVOR</b>	Custard and vanilla, sea salt.
<b>SEASONAL AVAILABILITY</b>	The cheese is not made from the end of July to the middle of December because the Agra shepherds do not separate lambs from their mothers so the milk at this time is for nursing, not cheese making. However feta is available year round in different age profiles.
<b>WINE SUGGESTIONS</b>	Soft reds and whites, like Pinot Noir, Beaujolais and Muscat.

